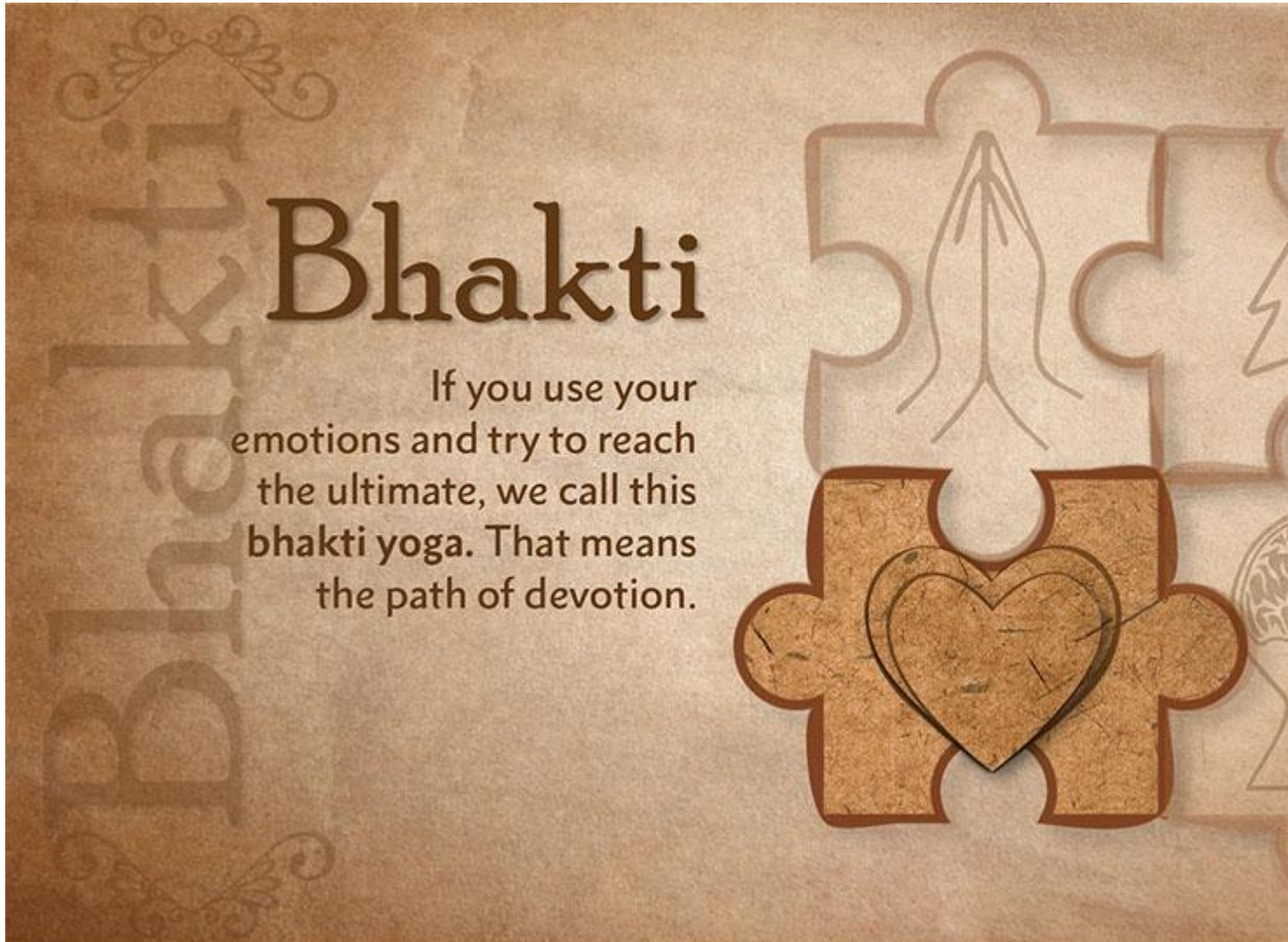


Bhakti Yoga: The Nature of Devotion

What is the nature of devotion and how can we practice bhakti yoga? Sadhguru explains how a devotee is someone who has the right perspective of his place in the existence.

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[பக்தி யோகா உங்களுக்கு பொருந்துமா?](#)

Sadhguru: Right now, the only things that are in your experience are your body, your mind, and your emotions. You know them to some extent, and you can infer that if these three things have to happen the way they are happening, there must be an energy that makes them happen. Without energy, all this

cannot be happening. For example, a microphone amplifies sound. Even if you don't know anything about the microphone, you can infer that there is a source that powers it.

These are the only four realities in your life: body, mind, emotion, and energy. Whatever you wish to do with yourself, it must be on these four levels. If you use your emotions and try to reach the ultimate, we call this bhakti yoga, the path of devotion. If you use your intelligence and try to reach the ultimate, we call this [gnana yoga](#), the path of intelligence. If you use your body, or physical action to reach the ultimate, we call this [karma yoga](#), the path of action. If you transform your energies and try to reach the ultimate, we call this [kriya yoga](#), that means internal action. These are the only [four ways](#) you can work with yourself.

What is bhakti yoga?

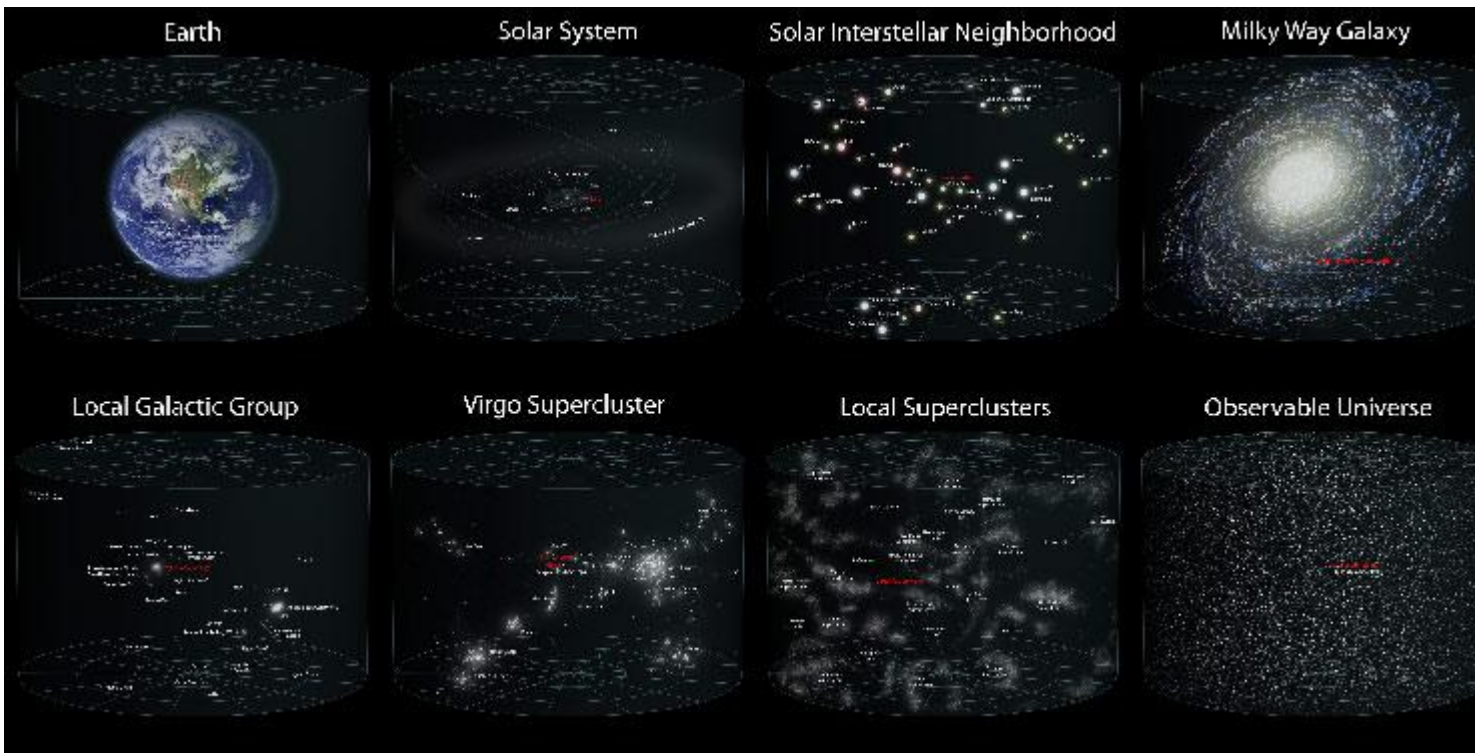
There was a time when the most dominant factor in a human being was his emotion. Today, emotion is not the most dominant part in you but it is still the most intense part in you. Most people are not able to get their physical body to a high level of intensity. It takes a lot of effort to [keep the body intense](#). People can keep the mind intense off and on, but very few people are capable [sustaining an intense mind](#). In energy, people are generally not at all intense. They know only certain moments of intensity, not a steady state of intensity. But emotion can get very intense. If not love, at least [in anger you are intense](#). In some emotion you are capable of being intense. If I cannot make you get intense with love or joy, if I abuse you, you will become intense with anger at least – intense to a point where you will not sleep the whole night. If I tell you, “Please sit and stay awake. I will teach yoga,” you will drop off to sleep. But if I abuse you, you will sit awake the whole night. Angry people cannot sleep, isn't it? So emotion has always been the dominant factor in human beings.

Bhakti yoga: Using intensity of emotion

The only thing is, emotion can take different forms. It can take very sweet and wonderful forms, it can take absolutely nasty and horrendous forms. The thing is to train it to take a sweet and beautiful form. Devotion is a way of transforming your [emotion](#) from negativity to pleasantness. Just see, people who have [fallen in love](#) do not care about what is happening in the world. The way they are, you think they are unrealistic. It is just that they have made their emotions pleasant, so their life is beautiful. That is the state of a devotee. Devotion is a multiplied and enhanced version of a love affair. A devotee is in an unending kind of love affair because if you fall in love with a man or a woman, they do not go the way you expect them to, and it eventually gets into some trouble. That is why people choose God. It is simply a love affair, and you are not expecting any response. Your life becomes utterly beautiful because your emotion has become so sweet. Through that sweetness, one grows. That is devotion.

Devotion is another dimension of intelligence. Intellect wants to conquer the truth. Devotion just embraces the truth. Devotion cannot decipher but devotion can experience. Intellect can decipher but can never experience. This is the choice one has to make.

Devotion: A question of perspective



A diagram of Earth's location in the Universe in a series of eight maps that show from left to right, starting with the Earth, moving to the Solar System, onto the Solar Interstellar Neighborhood, onto the Milky Way, onto the Local Galactic Group, onto the Virgo Supercluster, onto our local superclusters, and finishing at the observable Universe.

When you are overwhelmed by something or someone, you naturally become devout. But if you try to practice devotion, it creates problems because the line between devotion and deception is very thin – it will lead you into so many kinds of hallucinations. So you cannot practice devotion, but you can do certain things so that you arrive at devotion.

If you just recognize one thing, you will naturally become a devotee: the cosmos is very large. You do not know where it begins or where it ends. There are hundreds of billions of galaxies. In this vast cosmos, this solar system is a tiny speck. If the solar system disappears tomorrow, it will not even be noticed in the cosmos. In this tiny speck of a solar system, planet earth is a micro speck. In this micro speck of a planet, the city you live in is a super-micro speck. In that, you are a *big* man! This is a serious problem of perspective. It is only because of this that there is no devotion in you.

If you cannot imagine the vastness, the Hubble telescope has brought in all kinds of fantastic pictures which are on the internet. Just look at the pictures and see how endless it is. Or go out at night, switch off the lights and look at the sky. You don't know where it begins or where it ends, and here you are a [micro-super-micro speck of dust](#), spinning on a planet, not knowing where you come from or where you will go. It will be very natural for you to be devout. You will bow down to everything you see. If you just look at yourself with reference to the rest of the creation, there is no other way to go. It is only because people have lost perspective of who they are and what their place in this existence is, that they have become arrogant fools.

With all our science, we have not figured even a single atom in its entirety. We know things in bits and pieces, we know how to use them but we do not know what it is. If you realize this, if you observe everything, a leaf, a flower, an atom, a bird, an animal, an ant, you cannot understand one thing in its entirety. Then you will bow down to everything. Even an atom is beyond your grasp. That is the nature of creation. If you pay attention to the nature of creation, how can you not be a devotee?

One simple thing you can do is consider everything in this existence as higher than yourself. The stars are definitely higher, but try seeing the little pebble on the street as higher than yourself. Anyway, it is more permanent, more stable than you. It can sit still forever! If you learn to look at everything around you with attention and care, you will realize that you can not even figure the nature of an atom in its entirety. Everything is above your intelligence. Everything is higher than yourself, you will naturally become devout.

A devotee knows things that you cannot even imagine. He can grasp things that you have to struggle with because there is not much of him within himself. When you are too full of self, there is no room for anything higher to happen.

Devotion does not mean you have to be a temple-going, pooja-doing, coconut-breaking person. A devotee has understood what his place in the existence is. If you have understood this and are conscious of it, you will walk as a devout person. There is no other way to be. It is a very intelligent way to exist.

Editor's Note: *“Mystic’s Musings” includes more of Sadhguru’s insights on the nature of human emotions and the power of devotion. Read the [free sample \[pdf\]](#) or [purchase the ebook](#).*

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[Glacier Point, Yosemite National Park by Nimish Gogri.](#)